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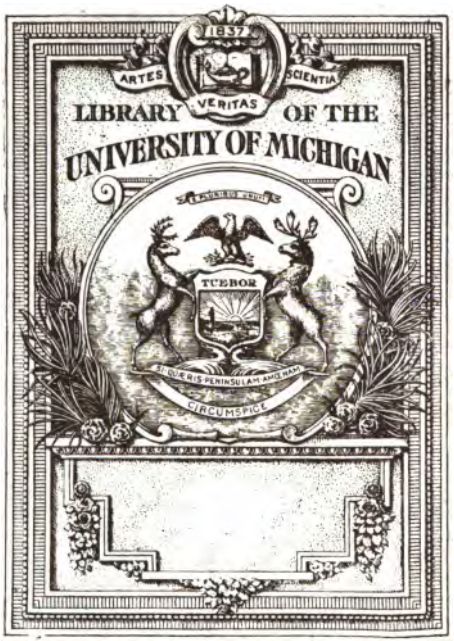

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"For long with horror she has viewed
The naked Truth for being nude"

MISREPRESENTATIVE WOMEN

By HARRY GRAHAM

Author of "Misrepresentative Men" and "More Misrepresentative Men"

ILLUSTRATED BY

DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

NEW YORK
DUFFIELD & COMPANY
MCMVI

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Publishers' Preface

GENTLE Reader, who so patiently
have waited
For such viands as your poet can provide,
(Which, as critics have occasionally stated,
Must be trying to a delicate inside,)
Once again are opportunities afforded
Of a banquet, or a *déjeuner* at least,
Once again your toleration is rewarded
By a literary feast!

You may think that Rudyard Kipling's work
is stronger,
Or that Chaucer's may be rather more
mature;
Byron's lyrics are indubitably longer,
Robert Browning's just a trifle more
obscure;
But 'tis certain that no poems are politer,
Or more fitted for perusal in the
home,
Than the verses of the unassuming
writer
Of this memorable tome!

Austin Dobson is a daintier performer,
Andrew Lang is far more scholarly and wise,
Mr. Swinburne can, of course, be somewhat warmer,
Alfred Austin more amusing, if he tries;
But there's no one in the world (and well you know it !)
Who can emulate the bard of whom we speak,
For the literary methods of *our* poet
Are admittedly unique !

Tho' he shows no sort of penitence at
breaking
Ev'ry rule of English grammar and of style,
(Not a rhyme is too atrocious for his making,
Not a metre for his purpose is too vile!)
Tho' his treatment is essentially destructive,
And his taste a thing that no one can
admire,
There is something incontestably seductive
In the music of his lyre!

Gentle Reader, some apologies are needed
For depositing this volume on your desk,

"Gentle Reader, who so patiently have waited"

Since the author has undoubtedly exceeded
All the limits of legitimate burlesque,
And we look with very genuine affection
To a Public who, for better or for worse,
Will relieve us of this villainous collection
Of abominable verse!

Eve

I ALWAYS love to picture Eve,
Whatever captious critics say,
As one who was, as I believe,
The nicest woman of her day;
Attractive to the outward view,
And such a perfect *lady* too!

Unselfish,—that one can't dispute,
Recalling her intense delight,
When she acquired some novel fruit,
In giving all her friends a bite;
Her very troubles she would share
With those who happened to be there.

Her wardrobe, though extremely small,
Sufficed a somewhat simple need;
She was, if anything at all,
A trifle *under*dressed, indeed,
And never visited a play
In headgear known as "matinée."

"Her wardrobe, though extremely small, sufficed a somewhat simple need"

Possessing but a single *beau*,
With only one *affaire de cœur*,
She promptly married, as we know,
The man who first proposed to her;
Not for his title or his pelf,
But simply for his own sweet self.

He loved her madly, at first sight;
His callow heart was quite upset;
He thought her nearly, if not quite,
The sweetest soul he'd ever met;
She found him charming—for a man,
And so their young romance began.

Their wedding was a trifle tame—
A purely family affair—
No guests were asked, no pressmen came
To interview the happy pair;
No crowds of curious strangers bored them,
The "Eden Journal" quite ignored them.

They had the failings of their class,
The faults and foibles of the youthful;
She was inquisitive, alas!
And he was—not exactly truthful;
But never was there man or woman
So truly, so intensely *human!*

And, hand in hand, from day to day,
They lived and labored, man and wife;
Together hewed their common way
Along the rugged path of Life;
Remaining, though the seasons pass'd,
Friends, lovers, to the very last.

So, side by side, they shared, these two,
The sorrow and the joys of living;
The Man, devoted, tender, true,
The Woman, patient and forgiving;
Their common toil, their common weather,
But drew them closelier still together.

And if they ever chanced to grieve,
Enduring loss, or suff'ring pain,
You may be certain it was Eve
Brought comfort to their hearts again;
If they were happy, well I know,
It was the Woman made them so.

. . . . . .

And though the anthropologist
May mention, in his tactless way,
That Adam's weaknesses exist
Among our modern Men to-day,
In Women we may still perceive
The virtues of their Mother Eve!

Lady Godiva

IN the old town of Coventry, so people say,
Dwelt a Peer who was utterly lacking in pity;
Universally loathed for the rigorous way
That he burdened the rates of the City.
By his merciless methods of petty taxation,
The poor were reduced to the verge of starvation.

But the Earl had a wife, whom the people
adored,
For her kindness of heart even more than
her beauty,
And her pitiless lord she besought and im-
plored
To remit this extortionate "duty";
But he answered: "My dear, pray reflect at
your leisure,
What *you* deem a 'duty,' to *me* is a
pleasure!"

At the heart of her spouse she continued to
storm,

"At the heart of her spouse she continued to storm"

And she closed her entreaties, one day, by exclaiming:—

"If you take off the tax, I will gladly perform
Any task that you like to be naming!"

"Well, if that be the case," said the nobleman, "I've a
Good mind just to test you, my Lady Godiva!

"To your wishes, my dear, I will straight acquiesce,
On the single condition—I give you fair warning—
That you ride through the City, at noon, in the dress

That you wear in your bath of a morning!"
"Very well!" she replied. "Be it so! Though you drive a
Hard bargain, my lord," said the Lady Godiva.

So she slipped off her gown, and her shoulders lay bare,
Gleaming white like the moon on Aonian fountains;
When about them she loosened her curtain of hair,

'Twas like Night coming over the mountains!
And she blushed, 'neath the veil of her wonderful tresses,
As blushes the Morn 'neath the Sun's first caresses!

Then she went to the stable and saddled her steed,
Who erected his ears, till he looked like a rabbit,
He was somewhat surprised, as he might be, indeed,
At the lady's unusual "habit";

But allowed her to mount in the masculine
way,
For he couldn't say "No," and he wouldn't
say "Neigh!"

So she rode through the town, in the heat
of the sun,
For the weather was (luckily) warm as the
Tropics,
And the people all drew down their blinds
—except one,
On the staff of the local "Town Topics."
(Such misconduct produced in the eyes of
this vile one

A cataract nearly as large as the Nile
one!)

Then Godiva returned, and the Earl had to
yield,
(And the paralyzed pressman dictated his
cable;)
The tax was remitted, the bells were re-
pealed,
And the horse was returned to the stable;
While banners were waved from each possible
quarter,
Except from the flat of the stricken reporter.

MISS MARIE CORELLI

Her praise is sung by old or young,
From Happy Hampstead to Hoboken,
Where'er old England's mother-tongue
Is (ungrammatically) spoken:
In that supremely simple set
Which loves the penny novelette.

When Anglo-Saxon peoples kneel
Before their literary idol,
It makes all rival authors feel
Depressed and almost suicidal;
They cannot reach within a mile
Of her sublime suburban style.

"Were she to mingle with her ink
A little milk of human kindness"

MISS MARIE CORELLI

Her modest, unobtrusive ways,
In sunny Stratford's guide-books graven,
Her brilliance, lighting with its rays
The birthplace of the Swan of Avon,
Must cause the Bard as deep a pain
As his resemblance to Hall Caine.

Mere ordinary mortals ask,
With no desire for picking quarrels,
Who gave her the congenial task
Of judging other people's morals?
Who bade her flay her fellow-men
With such a frankly feline pen?

And one may seek, and seek in vain,
The social set she loves to mention,
Those offspring of her fertile brain,
Those creatures of her fond invention.
(She is, or so it would appear,
Unlucky in her friends, poor dear!)

For tho', like her, they feel the sway
Of claptrap sentimental glamour,
And frequently, like her, give way
To lapses from our English grammar,
The victims of her diatribes
Are not the least as she describes.

MISS MARIE CORELLI

To restaurants they seldom go,
  Just for the sake of over-eating;
While ladies don't play bridge, you know,
  Entirely for the sake of cheating;
And husbands can be quite nice men,
And wives *are* faithful, now and then.

Were she to mingle with her ink
  A little milk of human kindness,
She would not join, I dare to think,
  To chronic social color-blindness
An outlook bigoted and narrow
As that of some provincial sparrow.

But still, perhaps, it might affect
  Her literary circulation,
If she were tempted to neglect
  Her talent for vituperation;
Since work of this peculiar kind
Delights the groundling's curious mind.

For while, of course, from day to day,
  Her popularity increases,
As, in an artless sort of way,
  She tears Society to pieces,
Her sense of humor, so they tell us,
Makes even Alfred Austin jealous!

Yet even bumpkins, by and by,
(Such is the spread of education)
May view with cold, phlegmatic eye
The fruits of her imagination,
And learn to temper their devotion
With slight, if adequate, emotion.

. . . . .

Dear Miss Corelli:—Should your eyes
Peruse this page ('tis my ambition!),
Be sure that I apologize
In any suitable position
For having weakly imitated
The style that you yourself created.

MISS MARIE CORELLI

I cannot fancy to attain
To heights of personal invective
Which you, with subtler pen and brain,
Have learnt to render so effective;
I follow dimly in your trail;
Forgive me, therefore, if I fail!

Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy

HAVE you a pain all down your
back?
A feeling of intense prostration?
Are you anæmic, for the lack
Of proper circulation?
With bloodshot eye and hand unsteady?
Pray send at once for Mrs. Eddy.

MRS. MARY BAKER EDDY

The Saint and Prophetess is she
Of what is known as Christian Science;
And you can lean on Mrs. E.
With absolute reliance;
For she will shortly make it plain
That there is no such thing as pain.

The varied ailments on your list
Which cause you such extreme vexation
Are nothing more, she will insist,
Than mere imagination.
'Tis so with illness or disease;
Nothing exists . . . except her fees!

MRS. MARY BAKER EDDY

A friend of mine had not been taught
This doctrine, I regret to say.
He fell downstairs, or so he thought,
And broke his neck, one day.
Had Mrs. Eddy come along,
She could have shown him he was wrong.

She could have told him (or his wraith)
That stairs and necks have no existence,
That persons with sufficient faith
Can fall from any distance,
And that he wasn't in the least
What local papers called "deceased."

Of ills to which the flesh is heir
She is decidedly disdainful;
But once, or so her friends declare,
Her teeth became so painful
That, tho' she knew they couldn't be,
She had them taken out, to see.

Afflictions of the lame or halt,
Which other people view with terror,
To her denote some moral fault,
Some form of mental error.
While doctors probe or amputate,
She simply heals you while you wait.

My brother, whom you may have seen,
Possessed a limp, a very slight one;
His leg, the left, had always been
Much shorter than the right one;
But Mrs. Eddy came his way,
And . . . well, just look at him to-day!

At healing she had grown so deft
That when she finished with my brother,
His crippled leg, I mean the left,
Was *longer* than the other!
And now he's praying, day and night,
For faith to lengthen out the right.

So let it be our chief concern
To set diseases at defiance,
Contriving, as the truths we learn
Of so-called Christian Science,
To live from illnesses exempt,—
Or else to die in the attempt!

Mrs. Grundy

WHEN lovely Woman stoops to smoke
(A vice in which she often glories),
Or sees the somewhat doubtful joke
In after-dinner stories,
Who is it to her bedroom rushes
To hide the fervor of her blushes?

The bare, in any sense or shape,
She looks upon as wrong or faulty;
Piano-legs she likes to drape,
If they are too décoll'té;
For long with horror she has viewed
The naked Truth, for being nude.

On modern manners that efface
The formal modes of introduction
She is at once prepared to place
The very worst construction,—
And frowns, suspicious and sardonic,
On friendships that are termed Platonic.

MRS. GRUNDY

The English restaurants must close
At twelve o'clock at night on Sunday,
To suit (or so we may suppose)
The taste of Mrs. Grundy;
On week-days, thirty minutes later,
Ejected guests revile the waiter.

A sense of humor she would vote
The sign of mental dissipations;
She scorns whatever might promote
The gaiety of nations;
Of lawful fun she seems no fonder
Than of the noxious *dooblontonder!*

And if you wish to make her blench
And snap her teeth together tightly,
Say something in Parisian French,
And close one optic slightly.
"Rien ne va plus! Enfin, alors!"
She leaves the room and slams the door!

O Mrs. Grundy, do, I beg,
To false conclusions cease from rushing,
And learn to name the human leg
Without profusely blushing!
No longer be (don't think me rude)
That unalluring thing, the prude!

MRS. GRUNDY

No more patrol the world, I pray,
In search of trifling social errors,
Let "What will Mrs. Grundy say?"
No longer have its terrors;
Leave diatribe and objurgation
To Mrs. Chant and Carrie Nation!

Mrs. Christopher Columbus

THE bride grows pale beneath her veil,
The matron, for the nonce, is dumb,
Who listens to the tragic tale
Of Mrs. Christopher Columb:
Who lived and died (so says report)
A widow of the herbal sort.

Her husband upon canvas wings
Would brave the Ocean, tempest-tost;
He had a cult for finding things
Which nobody had ever lost,
And Mrs. C. grew almost frantic
When he discovered the Atlantic.

But nothing she could do or say
Would keep her Christopher at home;
Without delay he sailed away
Across what poets call "the foam,"
While neighbors murmured, "What a shame!"
And wished their husbands did the same.

"And so he daily left her side
To travel o'er the ocean far"

He ventured on the highest C's
That reared their heads above the bar,
Knowing the compass and the quays
Like any operatic star;
And funny friends who watched him do so
Would call him "Robinson Caruso."

But Mrs. C. remained indoors,
And poked the fire and wound the clocks,
Amused the children, scrubbed the floors,
Or darned her absent husband's socks.
(For she was far too sweet and wise
To darn the great explorer's eyes.)

And when she chanced to look around
At all the couples she had known,
And realized how few had found
A home as peaceful as her own,
She saw how pleasant it may be
To wed a chronic absentee.

Her husband's absence she enjoyed,
Nor ever asked him where he went,
Thinking him harmlessly employed
Discovering some Continent.
Had he been always in, no doubt,
Some day she would have found him out.

And so he daily left her side
To travel o'er the ocean far,
And she who, like the bard, had tried
To "hitch her wagon to a star,"
Though she was harnessed to a comet,
Got lots of satisfaction from it.

To him returning from the West
She proved a perfect anti-dote,
Who loosed his Armour (beef compress'd)
And sprayed his "automobile throat";
His health she kept a jealous eye on,
And played PerUna to his lion!

Dame Rumor

I SHOULD like to remark that Dame
Rumor
Is the most unalluring of jades.
She has little or no sense of humor,
And her fables are worse than George
Ade's.
(Or rather, I mean, if the reader prefers,
That the fables of Ade are much *better*
than hers!)

Her appearance imbues one with loathing,
From her jaundiced, malevolent eyes
To the tinsel she cares to call clothing,
Which is merely a patchwork of lies.
For her garments are such that a child could see through,
And her blouse (need I add?) is the famed Peek-a-boo!

She is wholly devoid of discretion,
She is utterly wanting in tact,
She's a gossip by trade and profession,
And she much prefers fiction to fact.

"Where the spinsters at tea are collected,
Her arrival is hailed with delight"

She is seldom veracious, and always unkind,
And she moves to and fro with the speed
of the wind.

She resembles the men who ('tis fabled)
Tumble into the Packingtown vats,
Who are boiled there, and bottled, and
labelled
For the tables of true democrats:
Pickled souls who are canned for the public
to buy,
And (like her) have a finger in every pie!

With a step that is silent and stealthy,
Or an earsplitting clamor and noise,
She disturbs the repose of the wealthy,
Or the peace which the pauper enjoys.
And, however securely the doors may be shut,
She can always gain access to palace or hut.

Where the spinsters at tea are collected,
Her arrival is hailed with delight;
She is welcomed, adored, and respected
In each newspaper office at night;
For her presence imprints an original seal

On an otherwise commonplace journal or
meal.

She has nothing in common with Virtue;
And with Truth she was never allied;
If she hasn't yet managed to hurt you,
It can't be from not having tried!
For the poison of adders is under her
tongue,
And you're lucky indeed, if you've never
been stung.

Are you statesman, or author, or artist,
With a perfectly blameless career?

Are your talents and wits of the smartest,
And your conscience abnormally clear?
"He's a saint!" says Dame Rumor, and
smiles like the Sphinx.
"He's a hero!" (She adds:) "What a pity
he drinks!"

Gentle Reader, keep clear of her clutches!
O beware of her voice, I entreat!
Be you journalist, dowager duchess,
Or just merely the Man in the Street.
And I beg of you not to encourage a jade
Who, if once she is started, can *never* be
stayed.

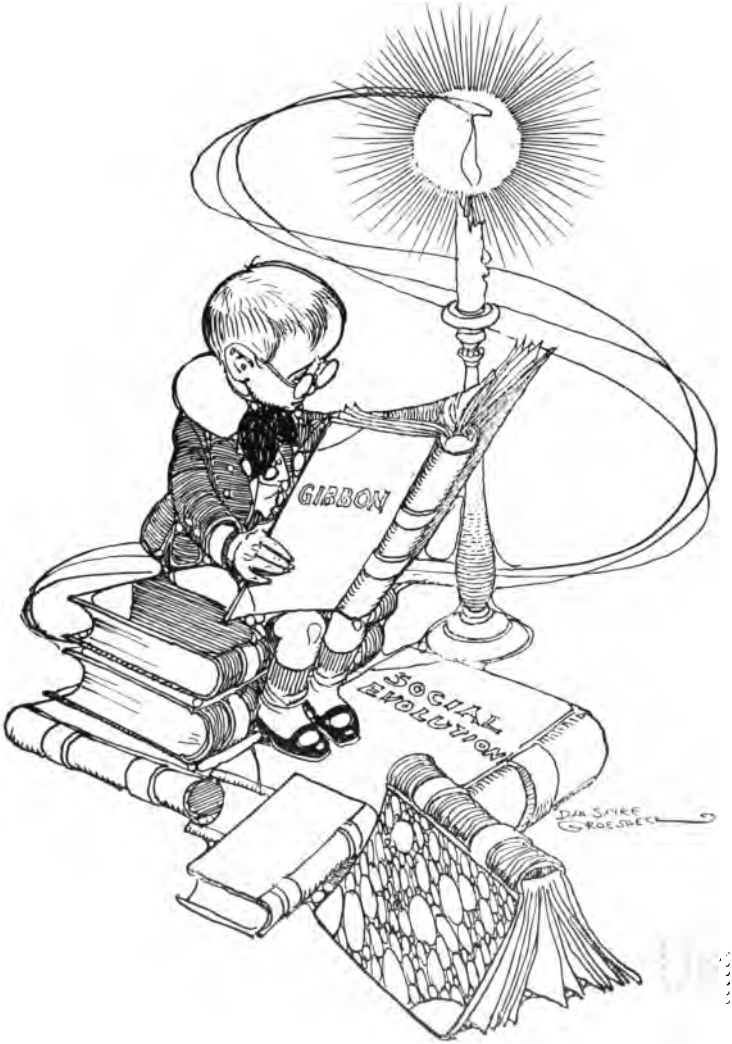
The Cry of the Children

[On the subject of infant education it has been suggested that more advantageous results might be obtained if, instead of filling children's minds with such nonsense as fairy-tales, stories were read to them about Julius Cæsar.]

O MY Brothers, do you hear the children weeping?
Do you note the teardrops tumbling from their eyes?
To the school-house they reluctantly are creeping,

Discontented with the teaching it supplies.
At the quality of modern education
Little urchins may with justice look askance,
Since it panders to a child's imagination,
And encourages romance.

Do you see that toddling baby with a bib on,
How his eyes with silent misery are dim?
He is yearning for the chance of reading Gibbon;
But his teachers give him nothing else but Grimm!



"He is yearning for the chance of reading Gibbon"

What a handicap to infantile ambition!
'Tis enough to make the brightest bantling fume,
To be gammoned with an Andrew Lang edition,
When he longs for Hume, sweet Hume!

See that tiny one, what boredom he expresses!
What intolerance his frequent yawns evince
Of the fairy-tales where beautiful princesses

Are delivered from a dragon by a prince!
How he curses the pedantic institution
Where he can't obtain such volumes as
"Le Cid,"
Or that masterpiece on "Social Evolution"
By another kind of Kidd!

Do you hear the children weeping, O my
Brothers?
They are crying for Max Müller and
Carlyle.
Tho' Hans Andersen may satisfy their
mothers,

They are weary of so immature a style.
And their time is far too brief to be
expended
On such nonsense as their "rude fore-
fathers" read;
For they know the days of sentiment are
ended,
And that Chivalry is dead!

Oh remember that the pillars of the nation
Are the children that we discipline to-day;
That to give them a becoming education
You must rear them in a reasonable way!

Let us guard them from the glamour of
the mystics,
Who would throw a ray of sunshine on
their lives!
Let us feed each helpless atom on statistics,
And pray Heaven he survives!

Let us cast away the out-of-date traditions,
Which our poets and romanticists have
sung!
Let us sacrifice the senseless superstitions
That illuminate the fancies of the young!
If we limit our instruction to the "reals,"

We may prove to ev'ry baby from the
start,
The futility of cherishing ideals
In his golden little heart!

The Cry of the Elders

[With steady but increasing pace the world is approaching a point at which the cleverness of the young will amount to a social problem. Already things are getting uncomfortable for persons of age and sobriety, whose notion of happiness is to ruminate a few solid and simple ideas in freedom from disturbance.—*Macmillan's Magazine.*]

O MY Children, do you hear your
elders sighing?
Do you wonder that senility should find
Your encyclopædic knowledge some-
what trying

To the ordinary mind?
In the heyday of a former generation,
Some respect for our intelligence was shown;
And it's hard for us to cotton
To the fact that *you've* forgotten
More than *we* have ever known!

O my Children, do you hear your elders snoring,
When the "chassis" of your motors you discuss?
Do you wonder that your "shop" is rather boring

To such simple souls as us?*
Do you marvel that your dreary conversation
Should evoke the yawns that "lie too deep for tears,"
When you lecture to your betters
About "tanks" and "carburettors,"
About "sparking-plugs" and "gears"?

O my Children, in the season of your nonage,
(Which delightful days no longer now exist!)

* "As us" is not grammar.—Publishers' Reader.
"As we" is not verse.—H. G.

We could join with other fogeys of our
own age
In a quiet game of whist.
Now, at bridge, our very experts are
defeated
By some beardless but impertinent
young cub,
Who converts our silent table
To a very Tow'r of Babel,
At the Knickerbocker Club!

O my Children, we no longer are respected!
'Tis a fact we older fellows must deplore,

Whose opinions and whose judgments are neglected,

As they never were before.

We may tender good advice to our descendants;

We may offer them our money, if we will;

Lo, the one shall be forsaken,

And the other shall be taken

(Like the women at the mill!).

O my Children, note the moral (like a kernel)

I have hidden in the centre of my song!
Do not contradict a relative maternal,
If she happens to be wrong!
Be indulgent to the author of your being;
Never show him the contempt that you must feel;
Treat him tolerantly, rather,
Since a man who is *your* father
Can't be wholly imbecile!

O my Children, we, the older generation,
At whose feet you ought (in theory) to sit,

Are bewildered by your mental penetration,
We are dazzled by your wit!
But we hopefully anticipate a future
When the airship shall replace the motor-'bus,
And *your* children, when they meet you,
Shall inevitably treat you
Just as you are treating us!

An Epithalamium

LONGWORTH—ROOSEVELT, FEBRUARY 17TH, 1906

HAIL, bride and bridegroom of the West!
Your troth irrevocably plighted!
Your act of Union doubly blest,
Your single States United,
With full approval and assent
Of populace and President!

AN EPITHALAMIUM

Let Spangled Banners wave on high,
To greet the maiden as she passes!
See how the proud Proconsul's eye
Grows dim behind his glasses!
How fond the heart that beats beneath
Those pleated Presidential teeth!

The bishop has received his cheque,
The final slipper has been thrown;
With rice down each respective neck,
The couple stand alone.
To them, at last, the fates provide
A privacy so long denied.

"How glad the happy pair must be
That Hymen's bonds have set them free"

Letters and wires, from near and far,
Lie thickly piled on ev'ry table;
The peaceful message from the Czar,
The Kaiser's kindly cable;
The well-expressed congratulations
From Heads of all the Sister Nations.

Rich gifts, as countless as the sand
That cloaks the desert of Sahara,
From fish-slice to piano (grand),
From toast-rack to tiara,
Still overwhelm the lucky maid
(With heavy duties to be paid!).

AN EPITHALAMIUM

See, hand-in-hand, the couple stand!
(The guests their homeward journey take,
Concealing their emotion—and
Some lumps of wedding cake!)
How glad the happy pair must be
That Hymen's bonds have set them free!

Free of the curious Yellow Press,
Free of the public's prying gaze,
Of all the troubles that obsess
The path of fiancés!
Alone at last, and safely screen'd
From onslaughts of the kodak-fiend!

The Bride, who bore without demur
The wiles of artists photographic,
Of vulgar crowds that gaped at her,
Congesting all the traffic,
Can shop, once more, in perfect peace,
Without the help of the police.

Arrayed in stylish trav'lling dress,
Behold, with blushes she departs!
The free Republican Princess
A captive Queen of Hearts!
(Captive to Cupid, need I say?
But Queen in ev'ry other way!)

And this must surely be the hour
For Anglo-Saxons, ev'rywhere,
With cousinly regard, to show'r
Good wishes on the pair;
Borne on the bosom of the breeze,
Our blessings speed across the seas!

Hail, Bride and Bridegroom of the West!
(Pray pardon my redundant lyre)
May your united lives be blest
With all your hearts' desire!
Accept the warm felicitations
Of fond, if distant, blood-relations!

The Self-Made Father to His Ready-Made Son

(AN OPEN LETTER)

MY Offspring:—Ere you raise the glass,
To irrigate your ardent throttle;
Ere once again you gladly pass
The bottle;
Take heed that your prevailing passion
Be not completely out of fashion.

No longer does the Prodigal
  Expend his nights in drunken frolic;
Or pass his days in revels al-
  -Coholic;
For, nowadays, a glass *de trop*
Is not considered *comme il faut.*

No longer do the youthful fall,
  Like leaf or partridge in October;
For they, if anything at all,
  Are sober.
(I mean the boys,—don't be absurd!
And not the foliage or the bird.)

No longer arm-in-arm they roam,
  Despite constabulary warning,
Declaring that they won't go home
    Till morning!
With bursts of bacchanalian song,
And jokes as broad as they are long.

No more they wander to-and-fro,
  Exchanging incoherent greetings—
The kind in vogue at Caledo-
    -Nian Meetings
(Behavior that we all condemn,
Especially at 3 a. m.).

Yes; fashions change—and well they may!
No longer, at the dinner-table,
Do persons drink as much as they
Are able;
And seek the hospitable floor,
When they have drunk a trifle more.

My nasal hue, incarnadine,
Shall not, perhaps, be wholly wasted,
If sons of mine but leave their wine
Untasted;
And vanquish, with deserving merit,
The varied vices they inherit.

Yes, Offspring, I rejoice to think
That, shunning my example truly,
You never may be led to drink
Unduly.
It is indeed a blessèd thought!
Now, will you kindly pass the port?

The Author to His Hostess

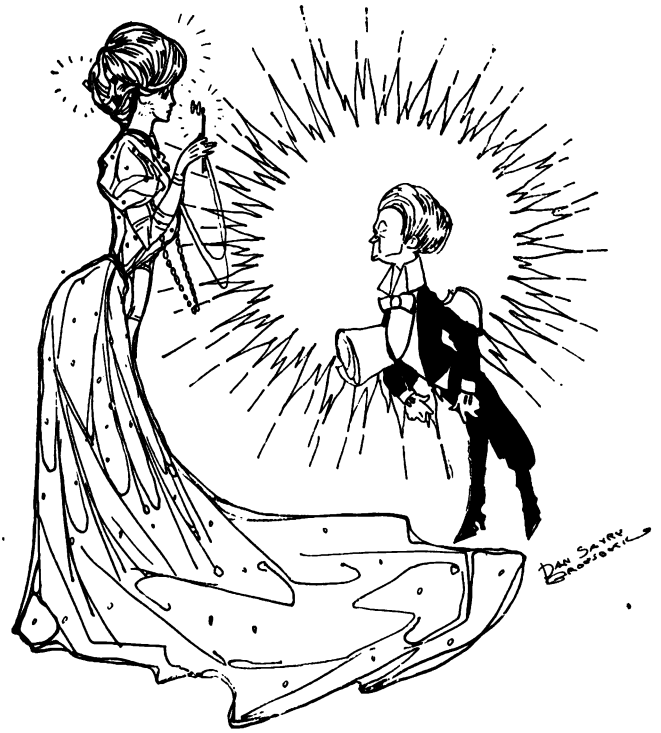
(AN OPEN LETTER)

[Very few English men of letters enjoy a desirable social position. To be sure, they are frequently invited to functions, where they are treated with insistent affability by persons belonging to the higher classes; but the sort of position to be obtained in this way is insecure, and unpleasant to any save those of adamantine cheek.—*Current Magazine.*]

DEAR LADY,—When you bade me come
To grace your crowded "Kettle-drum,"
And mingle in the best society;
When Melba sang, and Elman played,

And waiters handed lemonade
(Tempering music with sobriety),
I never had the least suspicion
Of my precarious position.

But now, with opened eyes, I leap
To this conclusion, shrewd and deep,
(What cerebral agility!):
Your compliments were insincere,
Your hospitality was mere
"Insistent affability!"
And I, a foolish man of letters,
Who thought to mingle with his betters!



"I wonder why they look such frights"

THE AUTHOR TO HIS HOSTESS

Ah me! How pride precedes a fall!
That one who haunted "rout" or ball,
When invitations were acquirable,
Should see himself as others see,
Becoming suddenly, like me,
A social "undesirable";
Invading the selectest clique
With truly adamantine cheek!

How proud an air I used to wear!
When titled persons turned to stare,
I blushed like a geranium.
When lovely ladies softly said:

"Oh, Duchess, did you see his head?"
"What a capacious cranium!"
"Yes; isn't that the man who writes?"
"I wonder why they look such frights!"

I used to bridle coyly when
Some schoolmate, of the Upper Ten
(They were not over-numerous!),
Would slap my back, and shout "By Jove!
"Ain't you a literary cove?"
(As tho' 'twere something humorous!)
"Those books of yours are grand, you bet!
What? No, I haven't read them yet."

But now I realize my fate;
A stranger at the social gate
(Tho' treated with civility);
The choicest circles I frequent
Must be the ones my brains invent,
With fictional futility;
The only Royalties I know
Are those my publisher can show!

The garden-party, and the tea,
Are surely not for men like me
(O Vanity of Vanities!);
Such entertainments are taboo,

And might debase my talents to
  Additional inanities.
The Poet has no business there:
Que ferait-il dans cette galère?

Ah, lonely is the Author's lot!
Assuming, if he hath it not,
  A suitable humility.
For when his daily work is done,
He must inevitably shun
  The homes of the Nobility,
As, with dejected steps, he passes
To supper with the middle classes!

On the Decline of Gentility Among the Young

(SUGGESTED BY MR. MAX BEERBOHM)

O YOUTH uncouth, who slouchest by,
Along the crowded public street,
An eyeglass in thy languid eye,
Brown boots upon thy feet,
A loose umbrella in thy grip,
A toothpick pendent from thy lip.

ON THE DECLINE OF GENTILITY

Much I deplore thy clumsy gait,
Thy drab sartorial display,
So wholly inappropriate
To this august highway;
How can a man in such attire
Set any spinster's heart on fire?

Thou art in dress no epicure,
By weight of fashions overladen;
Thy tawdry togs do not allure
The soul of every maiden;
They sound no echoing color-note
To her tempestuous petticoat.

"Small wonder she receives a shock each time she views thy billycock"

Her stylish skirt, her dainty blouse,
Are crêpe-de-chine, or bombazine*;
Compare the texture of thy trous:
With *their* chromatic sheen;
To what abysm of taste we reach
By the Observance of thy Breech!

Think what she pays her *modiste* for
Those hats of questionable shapes,
Surmounted by a seagull or
Some imitation grapes!

* Impossible.—Publishers' Reader.
These ones were.—H. G.

Small wonder she receives a shock
Each time she views thy "billycock"!

Observe how like an autumn leaf
The colors of the male canary,
The garb of each New Zealand chief
Who woos his Little Maori;
The savage mind has thus designed
A dress to please its womankind.

And tho' I would not have thee go
As far as primal man or beast,
To lovely woman thou should'st show
Some deference at least,

And give a thought of what to wear
Upon the public thoroughfare.

And should'st thou wish to walk aright,
Let Mr. Beerbohm be thy mould;
Sedate yet courtly, and polite
As any beau of old;
Yea, plant thy footsteps in the tracks
Of our inimitable Max!

Enclose thy larynx in a stock
(As though afflicted with the fever);
And in the place of "billycock"
Procure a bristling "beaver";

And practise, not I hope in vain,
The "conduct of a clouded cane."

If thou consentest thus to act,
In scorn of popular convention,
Thy bearing shall indeed attract
Much feminine attention;
As day by day, in brilliant hue,
Thy figure fills Fifth Avenue.

"*Lochinvar*"

(WITH APOLOGIES TO SCOTT AND SWINBURNE)

WHEN the shadow-shapes shone
like a shaddock,
Where the sunset had kissed
them to flame,
On his palfrey, the pick of the paddock,
With his sword in its scabbard, he came!
In the glamour of amorous passion
He would blaze like a seasoned cigar;

And he fought in a similar fashion,
Did Young Lochinvar!

By the fences and fens unaffrighted,
And unstopt by the stream in its spate,
In a lather, at last, he alighted,
And he knocked at the Netherbys' gate.
'Twas too late! (As he doubtless had dreaded.)
He perceived his particular "star"
To a blackguard about to be wedded,
Did Young Lochinvar!

"'She is mine!' he announces, adjourning
To the distant horizon afar"

But he passed through the portal so proudly
To the room where the gifts were displayed,
That old Netherby called to him loudly
(For the bridegroom, poor fool, was afraid).
"Is it blood you are bent upon shedding?
With a murder this marriage to mar?
Or to waltz do you wish at the wedding,
My Young Lochinvar?"

He replied, "Tho' 'twere useless to smother
My love for the maid at your side;

Tho' my Helen be bound to another,
I shall trust to the turn of the tied.
As I drink to her squint and her freckles,
I'll remark how few ladies there are
Who would shrink from a share of the shekels
Of Young Lochinvar."

Then he pledged her in port, so politely
(Tho' her mother lamented his taste),
And she smiled at him ever so slightly,
As he settled his arm round her waist.
When he drew her direct to the dancers,

The Bohemian band struck a bar,
And she found herself leading the Lancers
With Young Lochinvar!

Oh, the beauty and grace are so vivid
Of this perfectly parallel pair,
That the parents grow purple and livid,
And the bridegroom is tearing his hair;
While the bridesmaids talk ten to the dozen,
Saying: "Goodness, what gabies we are,
Not to marry our exquisite cousin
To Young Lochinvar!"

Then the girl by her partner is beckoned
To the door, where a charger they find;
To the saddle he springs in a second,
And he lifts her up lightly behind;
"She is mine!" he announces, adjourning
To the distant horizon afar,
"Till the cattle to roost are returning!"*
Says Young Lochinvar.

O the tumult! The tumbling of tables!
O the stress of the scene that succeeds!

* "Till the cows come home": an old English saying, denoting eternity.

O the stir on the stairs,—in the stables!
O the stamping and saddling of steeds!
But the bride has eluded them surely;
In the room of some kind Registrar,
She is now being wedded securely
To Young Lochinvar!

Abbreviation's Artful Aid

THE Bard, at times
Is stumped for rhymes,
Without the least excuse.
He can defy
Such moments by
Abbreviation's use,
And gain the grat:

Of friend or neighb:
Without an at:
Of extra lab:

So simp: a rule
May seem pecul:
And make the crit: indig:
What matter if
The scans: is diff:
The meaning too ambig:?
The net result,
Lacon: and punct:
Is worth a mult:
Of needless unct:

We long for sile:
From folks who pile
  Their worldly Pel: on Oss:
Extremely nox:
And quite intox:
  By their exhub: verbos:
We curse their imp:
  In manner dras:
And fail to symp:
  With their loquac:

In House of Rep:
Applause is tep:

For periphrastic Pol:
Reviewers sniff
At auth: prolif:
With semiannual vol:
But we can pard:
However peev:
The minor bard
Who will abbrev:

With pen and ink
In close propinq:
The Poet, lucky fell:!
Avoiding troub:

May give his pub:
The cred: for some intell:
And like an orph:
In pose recumb:
In arms of Morph:
Securely slumb:

Let corks explode:
With brand: and sod:
Ye wearers of the mot: !
Decant the cham:
(What matt: the dam: ?)
And empt: the flowing bott: !

And ne'er surren:
The Laureate's palm,
His haunch of ven:
And butt of Malm:!

Author's Aftword

HOW I have labored, night and day,
Just like the hero of a novel,
To drive the hungry wolf away
From my baronial hovel,
To keep the bailiffs from my home,
By finishing this bulky tome.

To such a trying mental strain
My intellect is far from fitted,
Tho' if I had an ounce more brain
I should be quite half-witted,
And when I wander in my mind
I am most difficult to find.

The sort of life for which I care
Is one combining Peace and Plenty
With *laisser aller*, *laisser faire*,
And *dolce far niente*.
(The heart of ev'ry Bridge-fiend jumps:
Dolce . . 'tis sweet to make "No Trumps.")

I shrink from work in any shape,—
Too clearly do these pages show it,—
But work is what one can't escape
And be a Minor Poet;
And critics I may well defy
To find a minor bard than I.

I ought to live out 'Frisco way,
Where working is considered silly,
As Greeley (Horace) used to say,—
Or was it Collier (Willie)?—
"Go West, young man" (I understand),
"Go West and blow up with the land!"